



# **PRESS RELEASE**

## **House Armed Services Committee**

### **Floyd D. Spence, Chairman**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

July 19, 2000

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#### **OPENING STATEMENT OF CHAIRMAN FLOYD SPENCE**

Today, the committee continues hearings on China's foreign policy, security strategy, military capabilities, and view of the United States. Our first hearing on June 21 focused on China's strategic intentions and goals. This morning's hearing will explore China's military capabilities and the impact of its military buildup on U.S. national security.

China maintains the largest military in the world, with nearly two and one half million active troops in the People's Liberation Army. Although most analysts believe it is qualitatively no match for the United States, China is making a significant and growing investment in its armed forces. China's military spending is increasing at a double-digit pace, its development of more modern and capable weapons platforms and its acquisition of more sophisticated hardware from countries like Russia is expanding its strategic reach. This will likely have a significant impact on America's ability to defend its vital interests in East Asia. When coupled with the bellicose rhetoric of senior Chinese military leaders, these developments should be of concern to the United States.

The Administration's latest report to Congress on Chinese military capabilities acknowledges that China seeks to become the preeminent regional power in East Asia. However, the Administration appears to take a more forgiving view of China's military potential – and the challenges it poses to U.S. security interests – than I believe is warranted. The Administration has argued that the technological level of China's defense industry is too far behind that of the West to produce weaponry that could seriously challenge the United States. However, China continues its aggressive effort to acquire sophisticated military-related technology, an effort that has been aided by the Administration's repeated loosening of export controls. Moreover, China's relative inferiority relative to the United States ignores the central issue – that Beijing's growing military potential can be used increasingly to deter our involvement in regional crises or dissuade others in the region from acting in support of U.S. interests.

As I expect we will hear from our witnesses this morning, the buildup of China's military capabilities is impressive. However, I am concerned that along with this increased military capability will come an increased willingness to use force in ways that directly threaten the United States and U.S. interests. China's military threats against Taiwan – and its buildup of ballistic missiles arrayed against Taiwan – should be taken seriously. Likewise, I believe it would be a dangerous mistake to discount as mere rhetoric China's nuclear threats against the United States should we come to Taiwan's defense in any conflict.

(MORE)

China's military acquisition efforts are extensive, and China has acquired military technology from the United States, U.S. friends and allies, and potential adversaries. One of the most troubling aspects of China's military modernization program is its growing strategic partnership with Russia, which Beijing views as an offset to U.S. power. China continues to acquire sophisticated military equipment and technologies from Russia, including fighter aircraft, ships, submarines, cruise missiles, and surface-to-air missiles. Russia is also reportedly helping China develop laser and other exotic weapons. Among the more troubling of China's recent acquisitions from Russia are two guided missile destroyers that will likely be outfitted with anti-ship cruise missiles specifically designed to counter U.S. carrier battle groups. Reportedly, China is seeking to purchase additional destroyers from Russia.

All of these developments carry profound implications for U.S. security and the ability of the armed forces to operate freely in East Asia in defense of U.S. interests.

To help us better understand the issues raised by China's military modernization program, we have with us today:

- Mr. Richard Fisher, Senior Fellow at the Jamestown Institute;
- Dr. June Teufel Dreyer, Professor of Political Science at the University of Miami;
- Dr. Stephen Blank, Douglas MacArthur Professor of Research at the U.S. Army War College; and
- Dr. Bates Gill, Director of the Center for Northeast Asian Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution.

Welcome to you all, and thank you for taking the time to appear before us today. I am looking forward to your testimony.

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